India (RBI), from the Scheduled Commercial banks, the number of sick Small Scale Industries (SSI) units has declined during the last three years *i.e.* 1999 to 2001. The number of sick SSI units in the country for the above period was as under:

Year (As at the end of March)	Number of Units
1999	3,06,221
2000	3,04,235
2001	2,49,630

(c) The RBI does not maintain data on number of labourers suffered due to sickness in SSI units.

The Government is fully seized of the problem of industrial sickness amongst the SSI units and has taken various measures to facilitate timely identification and rehabilitation of potentially viable sick industries, which *inter-alia,* includes institutional mechanism in the form of State Level Inter Institutional Committees, special rehabilitation cells in banks and State financial institutions and elaborate revised guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India for extending rehabilitation assistance to eligible units.

Seven Point Stimulous Package for SSI

2050. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will .the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that CII has suggested a seven-point stimulous package for the small scale industries;

(b) if so, the details of such suggestions;

(c) whether Government propose to have a national level policy for devloping exports of the SSI sector;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to

develop the infrastructure support and export consortia for small scale sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The suggestions are in respect of the following:

(i) Policy measures for promoting Venture Capital, Factoring services and the Capital markets (OTCEI), as alternative sources of finance;

(ii) Reforms to address Technology transfers, Joint Ventures and operation of the Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme for Technology Upgradation;

(iii) Strategic Plan for a National level policy for developing exports from the Small Scale Industries (SSI) sector including identification of sub-sectors with high export potential, export consortia and infrastructure support.

(iv) Aggressive promotion of usage of Information Technology, in manufacturing activities of SSIs.

(v) De-merging the SSI sector from the Agriculture sector, with regards to credit allocation, under the Priority sector lending targets for the banking sector.

(vi) Custom Duty rationalisation to be based on a carefully calibrated process.

(vii) Enactment of a Limited Liability Partnership Act.

(c) and (d) Policy measures for developing exports from the SSI Sector already exist. To encourage exports, Government operates schemes for assistance on acquiring ISO-9000 certificate, quality awards, export related Entrepreneur Development Programme & subsidising participation in international fairs/exhibition. Government have also formulated a Medium Term Export Strategy with specific action points for developing exports from SSIs.

(e) Infrastructure support for the SSI sector is provided through the Integrated Infrastructure Development (IID) Scheme and other

schemes of Government of India. The National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) has been supportive of efforts at formation of export consortia of SSIs.

Cooperation between India and Thailand in the field of space

†2051. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Thailand are considering to have cooperation in the field of space;

(b) if so, the whether Government have taken any action so far in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) An Agreement has been signed on February 1, 2002 between the Government of India and the Government of Thailand on cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. This is an umbrella Agreement under which specific cooperative activities could be carried out depending on mutual interest.

Study of data sent by TERRA

2052. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU); Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US satellite TERRA launched in last December under an international programme named Global Land Ice Management from Space (GLIMS) has started sending data on the Himalayan Glaciers, feeding Ganges, Brahmaputra and Indus rivers; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.